

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 5

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Lieutenant General Eugene P. Forrester, United States Army, of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Lieutenant General Eugene "Gene" P. Forrester of Watertown, a true hero of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a modest and gracious gentlemen throughout his lifetime, Lieutenant General Eugene Forrester proudly served this nation with the utmost courage and dedication, displaying his bravery and valor on the field of battle where he rightfully earned the thanks of a grateful nation; and

WHEREAS, a native Tennessean hailing from beautiful Watertown, Eugene Forrester was the son of Robert and Christine Forrester. Originally set to follow in his father's footsteps to become an attorney, he instead chose to enter military service to honor the memory of his brother, who died in 1942 in the crash of an U.S. Army plane; and

WHEREAS, entering the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1944, General Forrester was an able and enthusiastic young man who participated on the track and ski teams and was appointed a cadet officer before graduating with the Class of '48 as a lieutenant with the infantry of the U.S. Army; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Forrester began his career with the 350<sup>th</sup> Infantry in occupied Austria, seeing duty as a platoon leader and company commander before being selected to be an aide to the U.S. Forces – Austria commander; and

WHEREAS, later assignments included service at Fort Monroe, Virginia, and Camp Atteberry, Indiana, before heading overseas again to duty in Korea in 1952 as an aide to the I Corps Commander and later as a company commander in the 2d Division's 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry which led him to battlefield action at Old Baldy and Pork Chop Hill; and

WHEREAS, displaying courage under fire, Gene Forrester led a night counterattack to retake his unit's position after his battalion on Little Gibraltar was hit by a Chinese attack in March 1953 in the middle of a night rotation with another unit and for which he received a Silver Star for gallantry in action; and

WHEREAS, leaving Korea for duty in Japan as an aide, Gene Forrester met the love of his life, Miss Mary Louise Wagner, and the couple soon married and returned stateside for his next duty station, Fort Benning, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, leaving Georgia for duty as a Tactical Officer at West Point, the young soldier was promoted to Major in 1956 and the next year attended Command and General Staff College (C&GSC). After graduation, Major Forrester and his young family were sent to England where he attended British Staff College before spending the next two years stationed in Paris, France at the Headquarters of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE); and

WHEREAS, in 1963, Gene Forrester completed Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia, and was then sent to duty with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division at Fort Bragg as Deputy Commander, 2d Airborne Battle Group, 504<sup>th</sup> Infantry with whom he would see action in the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic; and

WHEREAS, continuing to rise up the ranks, Gene Forrester served as a Military Assistant to the Secretary of the Army in 1965 and was appointed plans officer for Headquarters, US Army Vietnam (USARV) in August of 1967; and

WHEREAS, rising to the rank of Colonel during his tenure in Vietnam, Gene left USARV in 1968 to command 3d Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, leading his men on the coast and in the mountains around Kontum; and WHEREAS, leaving Vietnam for stateside duty in Washington, Colonel Forrester served as executive officer to the Army Vice Chief of Staff and handled a number of sensitive issues, including the My Lai tragedy; and

WHEREAS, named a Brigadier General in 1970, he was sent to flight school in February of that year to begin preparation to be Assistant Division Commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and was soon sent back to Vietnam, leaving his family in the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, from November 1970 to August 1971, Brigadier General Forrester served as deputy for pacification for US Ambassador William Colby in Saigon. The tragic death of his

beloved wife, Mary Lou, in a plane crash would see him leave Vietnam and return his family to the U.S. as he was assigned to the Office of Personnel Operations; and

WHEREAS, promoted to the rank of Major General in 1973, General Forrester's next tours of duty included service as commander of Fort Benjamin Harrison and later command of the Recruiting Command at Fort Sheridan to build the All Volunteer Army and administer President Ford's amnesty program; and

WHEREAS, General Forrester was named commander of the Sixth Army in San Francisco in 1978, returned to Korea and command of I Corps/Combined Field Army in 1979, and served his last tour of duty as Commander, Western Command in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, retiring after thirty-five years of military service on July 1, 1983, Lieutenant General Forrester was the highest ranking member of the U.S. Army from Tennessee at the time of his death and spent his retirement years as a business consultant, sitting on several corporate boards of directors, and as a dedicated family man, spending time with his children and grandchildren and working on his golf handicap; and

WHEREAS, for his courageous military service, General Forrester's decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, and the Bronze Star as well as the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Master Parachutist Badge; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his beloved wife, Mary Louise Wagner Forrester, and his grandson, Wilson Waters Forrester, General Forrester is survived by his son, Chip Forrester, his two daughters and their spouses, Pamela Forrester and Joseph Landers, Jr., and Elizabeth Haselkorn and David Haselkorn, and five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly should pause to remember the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of an exceptional soldier, public servant, and human being, the late Lieutenant General Eugene P. Forrester; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Lieutenant General Eugene P. Forrester and pay respectful tribute to his impeccable character, limitless courage, and stalwart commitment to his country, his State, and his fellow man.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of General Forrester.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.